



Heritage Rose Groups in the United States

Interest in heritage roses seems to be growing throughout the United States, so we thought it time to publish this brief but by no means comprehensive look at some of the organizations across the country that are dedicated to growing, collecting, and promoting these remarkable treasures. We welcome background and contact information for any group not covered here, which we will publish in future issues.

—Virginia Kean

The Central Florida Heritage Rose Society

The Central Florida Heritage Rose Society, based at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, is officially affiliated with the American Rose Society and informally associated with the Heritage Rose Foundation and the Heritage Roses Group. The group promotes the growing of old garden roses in central and southern Florida. It educates the public on Florida's unusual soils and growing conditions and how to deal with them successfully. Founders

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Sandra Tipton, Malcolm Manners, and Martha Davies had been independently planning to found a heritage rose group in the area for a number of years. At the 1991 conference of the Heritage Rose Foundation held in Lakeland, they shared their dreams and began planning a formal group, which first met on February 14, 1993. The group has met monthly, September through May, ever since. In 2003 the society hosted the annual Heritage Rose Foundation meeting and conference. The “Bermuda Mystery Roses” were one of the major themes of that conference.

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Dallas Area Historical Rose Society

Loosely associated with the Texas Rose Rustlers, the Dallas Area Historical Rose Society was founded around 1981 by Joe Woodward, who with some rose-loving friends responded to an announcement at an American Rose Society district meeting of an old garden rose tour led by Pam Puryear of Navasota, Texas. This was the first of many meetings of a group later dubbed the “Brazos Symposium.” Eventually the group divided into The Dallas Area Historical Rose Society and The Texas Rose Rustlers. Based in Dallas, Texas, the group has about 250 members in 16 states and 6 foreign countries. Dedicated to education about and preservation of old garden roses and other roses of historical interest, the group meets monthly and publishes *The Yellow Rose* ten times a year. They support the Heritage Rose Garden at Chambersville, Texas and the Heritage Rose Garden at the American Rose Center in Shreveport, Louisiana.

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Heritage Roses Northwest

Based in the Puget Sound area of Washington State, Heritage Roses Northwest was at one time affiliated with the Heritage Roses Group but has been independent for many years. Founded in 1973 as the Evergreen Rose Society by Edith Schurr, it has a growing membership of nearly 100. Organized exclusively for educational purposes, the club promotes, encourages, and fosters knowledge and growth of old garden roses in the Pacific Northwest. The annual dues of \$5 ensure access to everyone and include a quarterly newsletter and quarterly meetings, workdays, displays, and open gardens. The group, which provides volunteers for workdays at members’ gardens (including Anne Belovich’s extensive collection), is developing a propagation network with records that identify location, cultivation, and growth characteristics of members’ collections.

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OPPOSITE TOP: The Heritage Rose Garden at the American Rose Center in Shreveport, Louisiana. Photographer unknown.

OPPOSITE: Auguste Gervais. Photo by Anne Belovich.

Heritage Roses Group

In 1974, Miriam Wilkins of El Cerrito, California, initiated the Heritage Roses Group (HRG) when she placed an ad in the American Rose Society's magazine asking those who shared her love of old roses to contact her. Among the earliest to join were Florence Malcolm, Mary Ann Green, Ruth Bancroft, Margaret Frost, Edith Schurr, Carl Cato, Lily Shohan, Charles Walker, and Léonie Bell. An article in the American Rose Society's magazine in 1975 announced the formation of the Heritage Roses Group, and the first *Rose Letter*, the HRG quarterly now edited by Jeri Jennings, was published in May 1975.

Informal in nature, with about 400 members across the United States and in Australia, India, Thailand, and Canada, the HRG provides opportunities to connect and share ideas on growing and propagating old or endangered roses, and assistance in identifying found roses. The HRG is famous for its "Celebration Of Old Roses," founded by Miriam more than 30 years ago and held annually in El Cerrito, California.



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ABOVE: "Manchester Guardian Angel." LEFT: Sacramento, California's Historic City Cemetery. Photos by Gregg Lowery.

Heritage Rose Group Affiliates

A number of different groups across the United States are affiliated with the Heritage Roses Group.

Central Coast Heritage Rose Group

The Central Coast Heritage Rose Group, formed by Bill Grant in the late 1970s and based in Santa Cruz, California, was originally begun some ten years earlier by Frances Grate in Monterey, California. It aims to get more people enthusiastic about the old roses that grow well along the coast, including Teas, Chinas, and Noisettes. Meetings to share cuttings and information, organized by Jill Perry, curator of the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden, are held at the University of California at Santa Cruz Arboretum.

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Gold Coast Heritage Roses Group

Founded in 2001 by Jeri and Clay Jennings, the majority of Gold Coast's 70 members are located in California's Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties, but Gold Coast extends to Los Angeles County as well. It maintains a Yahoo-based online discussion group that includes members in New York, Ireland, and India. Like the HRG, the group aims to preserve, enjoy, and share knowledge about old or endangered roses and meets two to three times a year. Many members keep in touch through a quarterly newsletter, *Gold Coast Roses*, and also support the San Jose Heritage Rose Garden (San Jose, California), the Historic Rose Garden (Sacramento, California) and the Stagecoach Inn Heritage Rose Garden (Thousand Oaks, California).

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Historic Rose Garden

Sacramento, California's Historic Rose Garden, which is located in a "rural" or "garden" cemetery established in 1850 in the Historic City Cemetery, was founded in 1991 or 1992 when the first roses were planted in the cemetery by the then Yolo and Beyond Heritage Rose Group. Its mission is to identify, collect and preserve roses that are part of California's horticultural heritage, while enhancing the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery. The group also maintains an internationally-recognized collection of roses found in California's historic sites, shares rose identification/lists with rosarians worldwide and historic rose cultivars with other public gardens and collectors, and provides a place to educate the public about heritage roses. The prime movers were Fred Boutin and Jean Travis, with Fred's collection of found roses as the main component of the first planting. Barbara Oliva eventually assumed responsibility for managing the roses and a group of local volunteers formed and took over.

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Heritage Rose Foundation

The Heritage Rose Foundation (HRF) is a nonprofit whose goal is to preserve heritage roses and promote their culture. It was founded in 1986 by Dr. Charles Walker, the first coordinator for the south-eastern region of the United States for the Heritage Roses Group and one of the early editors of its newsletter. Core leaders of the heritage rose movement in the U.S., including Joyce Demits, Virginia Hopper, Malcolm Manners, Gregg Lowery, Phillip Robinson, Ruth Knopf, Barbara Worl, and Liesbeth Cooper of the Bermuda Rose Society, supported the foundation from the start. Presidents have included Mike Shoup and Stephen Scanniello, who is currently serving his second term as president.

The HRF's 2005 conference, which was held in El Cerrito, California, celebrated California's rose heritage and was followed a few months later by the launch of *Rosa Mundi*, an international journal devoted to heritage roses. Membership, now at 542, is growing. The foundation supports the Heritage Rose Foundation Garden at the American Rose Center in Shreveport, Louisiana, which contains many mature Tea and China roses and a beautiful collection of large Hybrid Musk Shrub roses. Future plans are to add many rare and unique roses to the collection of Chinas and Teas and to add a collection of Noisettes donated by friends around the U.S. The HRF also supports the HRF Study Garden in Chambersville, Texas, which was dedicated during the 2006 HRF Dallas Conference. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Claude Graves and Dean Oswald, who donated the land and roses, the garden will house a collection of heritage roses suited for the North Texas climate.



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Heritage Rose Society of San Diego

With the urging and encouragement of Miriam Wilkins, the Heritage Rose Society of San Diego was founded in 1990 by Mary Ann and Jack Olson. With a membership of 55, its continuing goals are education and the care and growing of old roses. The group enjoys members' gardens during its Spring Open Gardens. After planting a period rose garden in the Old Town California State Park in 1991,

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annual pruning and advice on maintenance have been continuing projects. Field trips stimulate interest in the local rose history and heritage, including several trips to the Otay Mesa area where an endangered species, *Rosa minutifolia*, has been saved through relocation. A proposal has been introduced for the group to plant a stand of *R. minutifolia* in a natural canyon, accessible by hiking trails adjoining a nature center.

Meetings are held at various times during the year, with invited speakers and members sharing information on many subjects, including international rose conferences. Annual sales provide lively activity with new and unusual plants.



The New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society

Founded by Maureen Reed Detweiler, Rosemary Sims, and Karin Giger to realize a shared dream of forming an old rose society, The New Orleans Old Garden Rose Society held its inaugural meeting on March 9, 1993, and signed up 55 members. Its mission is to spread the word about the joy and importance of old roses, to return them to the gardens of New Orleans, and to preserve them for generations to come. Covering the New Orleans, Louisiana, and the five-parish greater New Orleans area, the group meets monthly, except for July, and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Many members belong to other heritage rose groups. Ms. Detweiler and Peggy D. Martin are trustees of the Heritage Rose Foundation and appointed members of the American Rose Society Old Garden Rose Committee.

Since Hurricane Katrina and the devastation that followed, membership has been reduced by half, to about 70 members. Prior to Katrina, the society planted and helped to maintain old rose plantings throughout the area. Many members lost their homes, and many more lost their gardens. The focus now is on replanting, and the society is grateful to the many old rose groups who shipped rose plants, rooted cuttings, and garden books to them.

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OPPOSITE: "Oneto House Saffron"
at the San Jose Heritage Rose
Garden. Photo by Gregg Lowery.

ABOVE: Two views of *Rosa
minutifolia*. Drawing from
Garden and Forest, V. 1, Issue 9,
April 1888.

Photo by Étienne Bouret.